

McIntyre
10/668,953

In the Claims

1. (currently amended) An end cap for the exposed ends of the pins and rods of an external fixator device, in combination comprising:

a) a fixator device for forming an exoskeletal brace for use on a limb of a patient, said fixator device having a plurality of fixation pins and at least one connecting rod, said fixation pins and said connecting rod being joined by a plurality of spaced connecting clamps on said connecting rod, and a plurality of fixation pins extending through each of said connecting clamps, said fixation pins having free first and second opposing ends away from said connecting clamps, said connecting rod having first and second opposing ends;

b) an a separate end cap being releasably positioned disposed on said free ends of said fixation pins for each connecting clamp leaving a space between end caps;

c) wherein each said end cap is oval shaped having first and second opposing ends and a first and second opposing side surface, said first side surface being generally disposed away from said fixation pins and said second side surface being generally disposed toward said fixation pins, said second side surface having a cavity therein; and,

d) pliable material filling disposed in said cavity, wherein said ends of said fixation pins are press fitted embedded into said pliable material to permit the free ends of the fixation pins to be covered.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 1 [[2]], wherein said end cap is disposed on said ends of said connecting rod to permit the ends of the connecting rod to be covered.

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4. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 1 [[3]], wherein each of said first and second ends of said end cap has a generally planar surface thereon.

5. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 4 [[6]], wherein each of said first and second ends of said end cap are conically shaped to prevent snagging on clothing.

6. (original) The end cap of Claim 5, wherein said cavity extends from a first point adjacent said first end of said end cap to a second point adjacent said second end of said end cap.

7. (original) The end cap of Claim 6, wherein said end cap comprises a blunt cylindrical shape.

8. (original) The end cap of Claim 7, wherein said end cap comprises soft material.

9. (original) The end cap of Claim 8, wherein said end cap comprises compressible material.

11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 9 [[11]], wherein said end cap is manufactured in a plurality of sizes to permit use with various sizes of the fixation device.

13. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 12, further comprising a bubble pack for containing the end caps of various sizes eap.

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) The end cap of Claim 13 [[14]], wherein said cavity is rectangular shaped.